

INTRODUCTION

Wisconsin's plan is designed with the purposes of TANF block grant, described under Section 401 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA), as its foundation. Wisconsin's TANF program seeks to provide the necessary training, supportive services and financial incentives for low-income parents to obtain permanent and stable employment with access to further training that will lead to career advancement.

Wisconsin's residents are its most valuable resource. Some residents are unemployed due to poor education, poor job skills and other barriers to employment. These problems not only limit individual achievement, but they hold back the state's economic growth.

The goal of Wisconsin Works (W-2) is to provide necessary and appropriate services to prepare individuals to work and to obtain and maintain viable, self-sustaining employment, which will promote economic growth. W-2 is one of several work-based programs designed to ensure that everyone in Wisconsin shares in our economic opportunities.

W-2 accomplishes this goal by providing needed services in a comprehensive fashion, including such services as job readiness motivation, job retention and advancement skill training as well as child care. W-2 employment and training services are available to any eligible Wisconsin resident unable to sustain employment or advance in the job market.

In addition to providing training and supportive services to the custodial parent(s) in the W-2 group, there are initiatives within Wisconsin's TANF program that seek to promote personal responsibility and career development among other family members. Programs such as Brighter Futures engage teenagers in constructive activities that put them on track for personal self-sufficiency as they reach adulthood. Comparatively, non-custodial parents are offered work training and supportive services through the Children First program, empowering them to meet their children's as well as their own financial needs.

Through a process of research and evaluation, the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) continues to look at fresh approaches to meeting the needs of our W-2 caseload. For example, in 2003, DWD implemented a more comprehensive screening and assessment process to ensure that participants' barriers are identified upfront and appropriate services and accommodations are provided to address those barriers. In 2004, DWD plans to implement a comprehensive demonstration project under the W-2 program that will evaluate an alternative work training strategy called Transitional Jobs.

W-2 policies are guided by the consistent application of the following philosophical principles:

1. Substantially all citizens want to be able to support their families, want to be economically self sufficient, and want to be employable members of the workforce.
2. W-2 shall be participant friendly. Each W-2 agency shall explain the full spectrum of employment, education, and training and supportive services available to assist individuals and families to transition into the workforce. When individuals and families are given adequate information about employment services, they will make an informed choice about whether or not to pursue those services.

3. Individuals determined to be eligible for participation in W-2 are obliged to cooperate with their employability plans or face sanctions. W-2 agencies rendering the services are obliged to properly and carefully assess each individual's specific needs in order to promote success in transitioning into the workforce.
4. Families are the foundation of society and are the vehicle through which children are nurtured and protected. W-2 programs and policies designed to assist participants in family formation will be evaluated in light of how well they strengthen and promote healthy, nurturing, and economically secure families where both parents are responsible.
5. W-2 agencies will assist families with multiple barriers to employment, ensure that all participants have equal access to the full spectrum of resources, and avoid arbitrary and inappropriate sanctions.
6. All programs and services shall be rendered in a fair and just manner, including adverse actions such as denials and sanctions, and participants will be informed of their appeal rights.
7. Individuals are part of various communities of people and places. W-2 operates in ways that enhance the way communities support individual efforts to achieve self-sufficiency.
8. W-2's goals are best achieved by working with providers, who are committed to customer friendly service, who partner with employers and other service providers, who are innovative, and who strive to continuously improve the provision of services.

The Department holds these philosophical principles as guidelines as it administers the W-2 Program and Related Programs. In addition, the Department requires that its W-2 agency providers be leaders in assuring effective planning and coordination with other work, training, income maintenance and related service providers on behalf of W-2 participants.

GENERAL PROVISION ASSURANCES

Under the TANF plan, with the exception of Safety Services and Child Welfare Prevention Services, Wisconsin will provide services to needy families at or under 250 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) with the level of services provided varying according to income and assets as outlined in the plan. For those two programs that fall under the fourth purpose of the TANF program (i.e., Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families), there are no income limits in place.

The State ensures the following:

1. Wisconsin's TANF program is designed to serve all political subdivisions in the State (not necessarily in a uniform manner), provide assistance to needy families with (or expecting) children, and provide parents with job preparation, work and support services to enable them to leave the program and become self-sufficient.
2. The program will require a parent or caretaker receiving assistance to engage in work (as defined by the State) once the State determines that the parent or caretaker is able to engage in work, or once the parent or caretaker has received assistance under the program for 24 months (whether or not consecutive), whichever is earlier.

3. Parents and caretakers receiving assistance under the program shall be engaged in work activities in accordance with section 407.
4. Reasonable steps shall be taken to restrict the use and disclosure of information about individuals and families receiving assistance under the program attributable to funds provided by the federal government. Chapter 49 of Wisconsin State Statutes details the restrictions on disclosure of information for Wisconsin's TANF programs.
5. Goals shall be established and action taken to prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies, with special emphasis on teenage pregnancies, and numerical goals shall be established for reducing the illegitimacy ratio of the State.
 - Wisconsin provides funding for projects to address adolescent pregnancy prevention, adolescent parent self-sufficiency, pregnancy counseling and adolescent parenting skills. Based on results from currently funded programs and initiatives, the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services (DHFS) in coordination with the Department of Workforce Development (DWD) developed the *Wisconsin Plan to Prevent Adolescent Pregnancy*. This plan focuses on three equally important key elements for all of Wisconsin's children and adolescents: health, nurturing and education.
 - The *Wisconsin Plan to Prevent Adolescent Pregnancy* established goals and actions to prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies, with special emphasis on adolescent pregnancies. The pregnancy rate in 2001 was 15% less than the 1995 pregnancy rate for females 19 and younger. The plan in 2001 was based on abstinence. Special areas of concern are subsequent pregnancies, child abuse and neglect, and sexual abuse/statutory rape.

The current goals of the plan are to decrease the percentage of Wisconsin youth who have had sexual intercourse from 39% in 2001 to 30% in 2010, and to increase the percentage of youth who will choose consistent and correct use of contraception from 76% in 2001 to 87% in 2010. This plan is in alignment with the State Public Health plan, Healthiest Wisconsin 2010.

- The Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Committee (APPC) is co-chaired by DWD and DHFS and is made up of public and private sector members from around the state. Representation includes provider agencies, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, the legal system, Wisconsin Medical Society, public health agencies, the faith community, private businesses, local government, teens and parents. Workgroups have been created to address specific areas of concern, including high-risk populations, and densely populated areas of the state. The APPC supports abstinence and is in the process of developing abstinence clubs throughout Wisconsin high schools. Funds to begin formation of the clubs have been distributed to eight locations. The goal is to develop 60 clubs each year for 5 years within 12 regions of the state.
- Although minor parents living outside of an adult supervised living arrangement are not eligible to receive cash assistance under Wisconsin Works (W-2), the W-2 agencies have been directed by the DWD to put special emphasis on providing case management services to minor parents, regardless of their income, assets, or living arrangement. All minor parents are eligible to meet with a Financial and Employment Planner (FEP) and receive W-2 case management services. Case management may include discussions

on family planning, money and time-management, career planning, and parenting and independent living skills. The FEP may also provide a minor parent with information regarding available child care services, high school and school-to-work preparation, community resources, and eligibility for food stamps, other food and nutrition programs and Medicaid. Eligibility determination for these other programs will be completed according to individual program eligibility rules.

- W-2, through its policies, encourages both parents to delay having additional children until the family is more financially secure. There are several ways the W-2 program encourages the prevention and reduction of the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies for the adult population served by W-2: 1) Flat grants: Like employment, W-2 provides cash payments based on participation, not family size. If an individual fails to participate, his or her payment is reduced by \$5.15 per hour. 2) Family cap: W-2 does treat parents who have additional children while on assistance differently. Parents caring for a child under 12 weeks old may be eligible to receive, as a "short term, non-recurrent benefit," a stipend to cover their living expenses that does not carry a work requirement. However, parents receiving such payments are exempt from time limits only if the child is born less than ten months after the individual was first determined eligible for W-2 (or if the birth was the result of sexual assault or incest). 3) Case management: FEPs may counsel participants to delay subsequent births or provide referrals to family planning services.
 - As part of the Case Management Training Series, Wisconsin is providing a participant guide on Employment-Focused Family Planning. The base of information developed will continue to be utilized in W-2 to assist participants in making choices about their career and family, encourage the use of resources available to them and make appropriate referrals based on their needs. Each W-2 agency maintains a list of family planning referral agencies and health care providers which is available to all customers.
 - *Children of Children, Portraits and Stories of Teen Parents* is a multi-media traveling exhibition showcasing 50 lives affected by teenage pregnancy. The stories range from events that occurred from 1918-1988. Community organizations hosted the exhibit, and expenses were covered in part by grant money through DHFS. The exhibit will run through the end of 2003.
 - The Wisconsin Family Planning Waiver is a Medicaid program for women between the ages of 15 and 44 whose income does not exceed 185% of the poverty level. It covers selected family planning services, including free contraceptive services and supplies, initial family planning office visits, and tests and treatment for sexually transmitted diseases. The program is administered by DHFS.
6. A number of state and local initiatives are under way in Wisconsin to address the problem of statutory rape so that teenage pregnancy prevention programs are expanded in scope to include men. Examples of these efforts include:
- The "Real Men Respect" campaign, a public relations campaign intended to prevent sexual assault and promote healthy teen relationships. It's produced by DHFS in partnership with the Wisconsin Coalition Against Sexual Assault. The campaign is targeted toward 13-17 year olds, with a primary focus on boys.

- Training and inservices to educators through the Department of Public Instruction on the topic of reporting requirements for sexually active adolescents.
- A locally-developed video series called *Sexuality, Attitudes and Awareness* is used to educate individuals on the legal issues and consequences of violating child sexual assault laws. The program is used with individuals who may benefit from the information as determined by the courts, a district attorney or a probation and parole officer.
- The Wisconsin State Legislature passed a law in 2001 that requires Child Protective Services (CPS) Agencies to refer all cases of suspected or threatened child sexual abuse to law enforcement. In turn, the law enforcement agency and CPS must coordinate the planning and execution of the investigation of the report. Any law enforcement agency that determines that criminal action is necessary must refer the case to the District Attorney for criminal prosecution. DHFS has developed a CPS standard that describes requirements and guidelines for collaborating with law enforcement agencies in reports of sexual abuse as well as reports of other forms of child maltreatment.